Sociolinguistics and the Misleading Use of the Concept of Anti-Language for Qumran Hebrew

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In the past decade, Gary Rendsburg has embraced William Schniedewind's characterization of Qumran Hebrew as an anti-language. Thus, he confesses that,

> When I first encountered Schniedewind's position … I admit that I was skeptical. Now, however, … I have come to embrace his position. In my own attempts to come to grips with all the peculiarities of QH, of the various interpretative routes before us, all of them proposed by leading scholars, I now accede to Schniedewind's view as the one that explains best the nature of QH.[1]

[1]Gary A. Rendsburg, "Linguistic and Stylistic Notes to the Hazon Gabriel Inscription," *DSD* 16 (2009): 107–16, at 112 n. 18; Rendsburg, "Qumran Hebrew (With a Trial Cut [1QS])," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at 60: Scholarly Contributions of New York University Faculty and Alumni* (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and Shani Tzoref; STDJ 89; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 217-46 at 232. See also Rendsburg, "The Nature of Qumran Hebrew as Revealed through *Pesher Habakkuk*," in *Hebrew of the Late Second Temple Period: Proceedings of a Sixth International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira* (ed. Eibert Tigchelaar and Pierre Van Hecke, with Seth Bledsoe and Pieter B. Hartog; STDJ 114; Leiden: Brill, 2015), 132-59, esp. 153, 158. More hesitantly, Steven E. Fassberg, "The Nature and Extent of Aramaisms in the Hebrew Dead Sea Scrolls," in Tigchelaar and Van Hecke, *Hebrew of the Late Second Temple Period*, 7-24 at 23.

Moshe Bernstein and Aaron Koller also refer, apparently with approval, to Schniedewind's understanding of Qumran Hebrew of anti-language.[2] In a short section *Hebrew Language 2: Sociolinguistics*, they state:

> In the area of the sociolinguistics of Qumran, Americans have contributed a characteristic emphasis on cultural theory and interdisciplinary sophistication to address the question of the origins and social background of the dialect of Hebrew within the Qumran texts. Among Israeli scholars this topic has been debated regularly, the question being whether Qumran Hebrew was a spoken dialect or a literary artifact. Americans asked a different question: in a society that is at best bilingual, and probably predominantly Aramaic-speaking, why write in Hebrew at all?"[3]

They briefly summarize the suggestions of Schniedewind and Steve Weitzman, and argue that taken together their contributions "provide a compelling combination of theory and data, and demonstrate the ideological value of the Hebrew language at Qumran."[4]

Their rhetoric indicates that Bernstein and Koller support these suggestions: they mention the *"interdisciplinary sophistication"* of the involved American scholars, refer to Schniedewind's *"strength* in his use of theoretical models," and qualify his and Weitzman's contributions as a *"compelling* combination of theory and data" which *demonstrates* the ideological value of the Hebrew language at Qumran. Even a critical footnote confirms the rhetoric: there are indeed "some im-

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[2]Moshe J. Bernstein and Aaron Koller, "The Aramaic Texts and the Hebrew and Aramaic Languages at Qumran: The North American Contribution," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Scholarly Perspective: A History of Research* (ed. Devorah Dimant with Ingo Kottsieper; STDJ 99; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 155-95

[3]Bernstein and Koller, 189-90. For tan overview of those Israeli scholars who discussed whether Qumran Hebrew was vernacular or literary, see Steven E. Fassberg, "Israeli Research into Hebrew and Aramaic at Qumran." in Dimant, *History of Research*, 363-80, esp. 369-71.

[4]Bernstein and Koller, 190-91.

plausible *details* in Schniedewind's article, but these do not on their own affect the *theoretical perspective*." One cannot but notice the emphasis on, and positive evaluation of, theory.[5]

We have to discuss to what extent Weitzman and Schniedewind, as well as more recently Rendsburg, have indeed provided theoretical sociolinguistic frameworks which enable one to sort out and explain the peculiarities of Qumran Hebrew.[6] Even though they crossreference each other's work, Weitzman and Schniedewind by no means pose the same queries or offer compatible approaches, thus also raising the question how own should assess the difference between their approaches, and how these sociolinguistic approaches relate to nonlinguistic interpretations of the texts from Qumran.

1. Qumran Hebrew in a Multilingual Society: Holy Language or anti-language

Weitzman and Schniedewind's articles were both published in American journals in 1999, and offer sociolinguistic explanations for the use of Hebrew in the Qumran texts. One should immediately note, however, that their initial questions as well as the subsequent explanations are entirely different. Weitzman's question, clearly expressed in the title of his aricle, is why, in multilingual Palestine, the Qumran sect only used Hebrew in its own writing, and consistently avoided the other languages of Hellenistic-Roman Palestine such as Aramaic and Greek.[7] Schniedewind's query

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[5]Phraseology taken from Bernstein and Koller., 189-90. All italics in this paragraph are mine, for emphasis.

[6]Other scholars who have accepted Schniedewind's hypothesis of Qumran Hebrew as an anti-language are David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 259 and Dong-Hyuk Kim, *Early Biblical Hebrew, Late Biblical Hebrew, and Linguistic Variability: A Sociolinguistic Evaluation of the Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts* (VTSup 156; Leiden: Brill, 2013), 46-47, 106-7.

[7]Steve Weitzman, "Why Did the Qumran Community Write in Hebrew?," *JAOS* 119 (1999): 35-45,

concerns the specific form of Hebrew that is found in many of the Qumran writings, which shows avoidance of both the Aramaic and contemporary popular Hebrew, which he originally simply identified with Mishnaic Hebrew.[8]

Weitzman acknowledges differences between Qumran Hebrew and Hebrew in general, but questioned Schniedewind's description of Qumran Hebrew as an "anti-language" created in conscious opposition to the "standard" language, and his identification of this standard language as Mishnaic Hebrew.[9] He states that "some of the language-features linked by Schniedewind to the Qumran sect's ideology can be attributed to non-ideological factors" and that we do not have enough information to draw causal links between the isoglosses of Qumran Hebrew and the sect's ideology.[10] Weitzman himself constructs an argument on the basis of 4Q464 (לשון הקודש) and Jub. 12:25-27 (Hebrew as the language of creation) which share a perception of Hebrew as the true or holy language. This perception of Hebrew as the language of creation as well as the pure eschatological speech, may be connected to the use of Hebrew as "esoteric speech," which perhaps also was related to the idea of the community being able to participate with the angels in speech. Weitzman is careful not to assume that these writings and their ideas were exclusively connected to the Qumran sect, and assumes that the Qumran sect was part of a broader linguistic culture that shared views on the use of Hebrew. The use of Hebrew in the Qumran community and other such groups would have been one way to transcend the multilingualism in a society of competing ideologies and languages.[11]

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esp. 35-36.

[8]William M. Schniedewind, "Qumran Hebrew as an Antilanguage," *JBL* 118 (1999): 235-52 simply refers to the avoidance of typically Mishnaic Hebrew forms of language. In Schniedewind, *A Social History of Hebrew: Its Origins Through the Rabbinic Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013) this popular language is not anymore identified with Mishnaic Hebrew.

[9]Weitzman, "Why," 37.

[10]Weitzman, "Why," 37.

[11]See the various ways of expressing this point in Weitzman, "Why," 45.

Weitzman refers to several sociolinguistic phenomena which support his hypothesis, for example, analogies with recent "speech communities seeking to maintain their ancestral languages in multilingual societies."[12] Schniedewind bases his description of Qumran Hebrew as anti-language on the foundational article of Michael Halliday,[13] and one paragraph from an article by Judith Irvine.[14] He briefly summarizes their statements on "anti-language," and emphasizes three features, namely the "conspicuous avoidance or even violation of forms recognized as standard,"[15] the specific lexicon and relexicalization of anti-languages,[16] and the fact that anti-languages come forth from an anti-society attitude.[17] He recognizes these features of anti-language in four areas which "point to the conscious creation of an antilanguage by scribes within the Qumran community."[18] Those include the avoidance of Aramaic and popular language (= Mishnaic Hebrew), classicizing tendencies, orthography and paleography, and the use of code and symbolic terminology. Together they indicate that within the Qumran community language was a means for differentiating the group.[19]

This approach seems to illustrate the value of cultural theory, in this case sociolinguistics. A concept like anti-language labels not only one set of data, such as the paucity of loanwords in Qumran Hebrew, or the use of sobriquets. Instead, it explains an ensemble of different data as all

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[12]Weitzman, "Why," 40.

[13]M. A. K. Halliday, "Anti-Languages," *American Anthropologist* 78 (1976): 570-84.

[14]Judith T. Irvine, "When Talk Isn't Cheap: Language and Political Economy," *American Ethnologist* 16 (1989): 248-67, esp. 253.

[15]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 242.

[16]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 239-41.

[17]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 238, 250.

[18]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 242.

[19]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 242. See the slightly revised phrasing in Schniedewind, *Social History*, 178, omitting the reference to Mishnaic Hebrew, and using "pseudoclassicizing" instead of "classicizing."

related to one cultural linguistic phenomenon: the creation of a language by conscious linguistic choices intended to set the speaker and their language apart from others. Schniedewind sees this phenomenon also supported by how some Qumran texts speak *about* their own and their opponents' language. Following Chaim Rabin, he argues that derogatory phrases in Qumran texts to "halting language" and "blasphemous language," refer to spoken or Mishnaic Hebrew of those who say about the laws of the covenant of God that they are not fixed (CD 5:11-12), i.e., those who legitimized the oral law.[20] On the other hand, the terminology of words measured out by God by pattern (ותשם דברים על קו) in 1QH^{a} 9:30 would, given the proposed meaning of קו as "archetype," refer to a preclassical archetype of language given at the foundation of the world, which the Qumranites tried to emulate.[21] This hypothesis then serves to explain linguistic anomalies in general: those are the Qumran sect's attempts to reconstruct preclassical forms. At the basis of this hypothesis lies the assumption of the counter-societal character of the Qumran sect generated their special anti-language, by means of which they expressed their social role in opposition to other Jewish groups in Palestine, especially those groups concerned with oral law.

After his initial anti-language article, Schniedewind gradually developed his hypothesis. In a follow-up article,[22] he introduces the concept of "linguistic ideology" which could explain various specific Qumran idiosyncratic forms (the use of a pre-classical form such as אביהו rather than אביו; the longer form with *he* in a variety of grammatical forms; the use of so-called pausal forms in

[20]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 239-40. See also, slightly differently, *Social History*, 175.

[21]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 240-41. See also, slightly differently, *Social History*, 175-76. One should note, though, that this proposal is based neither on a sustained interpretation of the entire passage, nor on an investigation of קו throughout the Hodayot on more extensively in Qumran Hebrew.

[22]William M. Schniedewind, "Linguistic Ideology in Qumran Hebrew," in *Diggers at the Well: Proceedings of a Third International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira* (ed. Takamitsu Muraoka and John F. Elwolde; STDJ 36; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 245-55.

non-pausal position).[23] The emphasis has thus shifted from a a very specific and rare sociolinguistic concept, to a more general notion in sociolinguistic studies. In subsequent articles he refrained from the notion of anti-language, while, more generally, referring to language ideology.[24] In his most recent book he offers a more expanded discussion of features of the Qumran texts and Qumran Hebrew, but also returns to the thesis that "Qumran Hebrew can be characterized by the sociolinguistic category of an antilanguage."[25]

In his recent work, Rendsburg has embraced Schniedewind's use of anti-language and put forward elements that "constitute evidence for understanding QH as an anti-language, used by the Yahad to distinguish itself intentionally from other Jews of the period, while at the same time providing their texts with a patina of antiquity and hence authority."[26] The evidence consists exclusively of examples of intentional archaism (or pseudo-classicisms) in order to construct an anti-language. Rendsburg does not discuss, let alone operationalize, the notion of anti-language. Rather, he tacitly reduces Schniedewind's anti-language to two elements, namely presumed archaizing tendencies in Qumran Hebrew and the supposition that these were intended to distin-

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[23]The article actually distinguishes more or less between language ideology (when dealing more generally with the Qumran sect's ideology of language) and linguistic ideology where this is reflected in the choice for specific grammatical forms. This article also corrects some inexactitudes of the earlier one. Rather than contrasting Qumran Hebrew to Mishnaic Hebrew, it contrasts it to "the vernacular spoken in Jerusalem by the opponents of the Qumran sect" ("Linguistic Ideology," 246) and has replaced classicizing by pseudo-classicizing.

[24]William M. Schniedewind, "Prolegomena for the Sociolinguistics of Classical Hebrew," *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 5 (2004) article 6 (http://www.jhsonline.org/); Schniedewind, "Aramaic, the Death of Written Hebrew, and Language Shift in the Persian Period," in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures* (ed. Seth L. Sanders; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2006).

[25]Schniedewind, *Social History*, 177. Cf. also 183, 185, 187, 188.

[26]Rendsburg, "Nature of Qumran Hebrew," 153-54.

guish oneself from other groups. Interestingly, he introduces two new explanations, namely those of conservatism and the striving for authenticity, two notions that were never mentioned by Schniedewind. For example, he writes, "Given the very strict adherence by the DSS sect to legal, cultic, and social mores, which were more conservative than those held by other contemporary Jewish groups, one is warranted to conclude that the *Qumran community extended this conservativism* to their Hebrew language as well."[27] Where, for Schniedewind, these scribes were part of a counter-society and adhered to a linguistic ideology, Rendsburg turns them into a conservative group who preferred old forms since these would be more respectable.

2. The Theory: Sociolinguistics and the Concept of Anti-Language

All modern discussions of anti-language refer back to Halliday, who first introduced the concept with its present meaning,[28] in discussing the commonalities of three extreme versions of social dialects, the language of the vagabonds in Elizabethan England, the language of Polish prisons, and that of Calcutta criminals and students. Characteristic of all three are relexicalization and overlexicalization. That is, "anti-languages" consciously and constantly create new words for the older ones of the language on which it depends, especially for the areas "that are central to the subculture, and that help to set if off most sharply from the established society."[29] This relexicalization process often happens in simple manners, by different phonetic changes, or by giving a new

[27]Rendsburg, "Trial Cut," 231-32.

[28]The term was earlier used by Hugo Steger, "Gruppensprachen. Ein methodisches Problem der inhaltsbezogenen Sprachbetrachtung," *Zeitschrift für Mundartforschung* 31 (1964): 125–38 for the linguistic changes within a group of students who "developed a special vocabulary and brought about shifts, re-arrangements, and leveling within semantic categories … in contrast to everyday speech (group language as anti-language)" (quotation from summary).

[29]Halliday, "Anti-languages," 571.

metaphorical sense to existing words. Of course, the latter happens in all social dialects, but typical of anti-languages is overlexicalization: one creates multiple synonymous new words for the key areas in which the group different from society.

The usefulness of the concept lies not in its being a clearly defined absolute category with a limited number of examples, but a heuristic concept, an "idea to which given instances approximate more or less closely."[30] More broadly in sociolinguistics, the term "anti-language" is also used in two other domains, namely in the discussion of youth culture and language,[31] and for specific cases of the use of patois, pidgin, or creole languages.[32] Thus Irvine, who was quoted by Schniedewind, expands the notion by including forms of dialogue or conversation that run counter to standard practice, such as in the Antiguan contrapuntal conversations, or the language and communication of urban black America of the 1970s. It is in this context that she mentions "the conspicuous avoidance and violation of forms recognized as 'standard,'" referring to forms of conversation rather than to grammatical forms.

How then does Schniedewind's model of anti-language relate to those of Halliday and sociolinguists in general? Schniedewind mentions that relexicalization and metaphor are features of anti-languages, and gives as examples in Qumran Hebrew the new meaning of a word as קו (archetype, rather than pattern), as well as the code terminology common to some pesharim, like the דורשי חלקות. However, semantic specialization is not the same as relexicalization, and the use of code words referring to individuals or groups characterizes only a very small number of texts, and may not even be intended as a code word, but rather as a sobriquet. In no way do we see in Qum-

[30]Martin Montgomery, *An Introduction to Language and Society*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1995), 100-101.

[31]See examples in Montgomery, *Introduction*, 98-104. Also, Ellen Hurst, "Metaphor in South African Tsotsitaal," *Sociolinguistic Studies* 10 (2016): 153-75.

[32]Irvine, "When Talk Isn't Cheap," esp. 253; Suzanne Romaine, "Orthographic Practices in the Standardization of Pidgins and Creoles: Pidgin in Hawai'i as Anti-Language and Anti-Standard," *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 20 (2005): 101-40.

ran Hebrew the process of relexicalization, let alone overlexicalization, of which Halliday and Montgomery give many examples, and which sociolinguists regard as typical of anti-languages. Also, he provides no examples to the different forms of metphorical expressions and phonological variants of which Halliday gives many examples. A large part of Schniedewind's argument hinges on Irvine's one statement about "the conspicuous avoidance and violation of forms recognized as 'standard,'" which Schniedewind applies to the avoidance of Aramaic and Mishnaic words and linguistic forms, but which Irvine rather uses in relation to forms of communication. In short, the most characteristic linguistic feature of anti-languages, relexicalization and overlexicalization, are largely or entirely lacking from the Qumran texts.

Sociologically, the supposed Qumran community is hardly comparable to those subcultures and other groups that occupy a marginal or precarious position in society and which are generally connected to anti-languages.[33] In fact, exactly the oppsite has been argued: the Qumran statements about the language of the opponents are consistent with the behaviour of *elite* groups.[34] Also, (pseudo-)classicizing or archaizing tendencies are nontypical of anti-languages, which, in contrast, are characterized by constant change and renewal.

Altogether Schniedewind provides nothing that warrants calling Qumran Hebrew an anti-language. When referring to anti-language, he was not using a theoretical idea and applying it appropriately to the ancient data. Rather, the thesis and the label seemed to be based on an interpretation of the Qumran community as a movement that wanted to set itself apart, and therefore

[33]Montgomery, *Introduction*, 96, who explains the function of relexicalization and overlexicalization in such social groups: "it makes the anti-language especially impenetrable to outsiders. The sense of solidarity between members of the subculture is heightened and maintained; and their frequently illicit dealings can remain semi-confidential, even when conducted in relatively public places such as the club, bar or street" (97).

[34]Weitzman, "Why," 43-44.

consciously set their language apart from the standard, or, put differently, that "group ideology finds its reflex in a linguistic ideology."[35]

3. The Data: Purported Anti-Language Features in the Scrolls

In Schniedewind's and Rendburg's work, much attention is given to classicizing, as well as purported pseudo-classicizing tendencies in the scrolls. Together, they provide the following examples:

1. QH uses most often the form אשר, in clauses where Mishnaic Hebrew uses ש;[36]

2. QH has often long pronominal forms, both independent and suffixed;[37]

3. QH has suffixed *-ah* in a variety of adverbials, especially מאודה and שמה.[38]

4. QH has the long forms of the first person imperfect;[39]

5. QH often has the old אביהו forms rather than the later אביו;[40]

6. QH geenrally has the "archaic" אל for אלהים;[41]

7. QH repeatedly has the "archaic" למו rather than להם;[42]

8. QH has a preference for the "older grammatical form" בם above the "newer one" בהם;[43]

9. Use of עדה rather than the Late Biblical Hebrew קהל;[44]

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[35]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 239.

[36]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 242-44, esp. 243; "Linguistic Ideology," 254

[37]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 237, 242; "Linguistic Ideology," 254.

[38]Schniedewind, "Linguistic Ideology," 253; Rendsburg, "Trial Cut," 236-37.

[39]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 245-46; "Linguistic Ideology," 253.

[40]Schniedewind, "Antilanguage," 237-39, 245; Rendsburg, "Trial Cut," 237.

[41]Rendsburg, "Trial Cut," 238-39.

[42]Rendsburg, "Trial Cut," 239-40.

[43]Rendsburg, "Trial Cut," 240.

[44]Rendsburg, "Nature," 154-55.

10. The use of the classical בעבור rather than למען.[45]

11. Preference for the Classical Hebrew ותם ending above the Late Biblical Hebrew ותיהם one.[46]

However, it is in most cases not clear why these phenomena would in fact be pseudo-classicizing, let alone motivated by a wish to use an archaic form, or even reveal aspects of an anti-language.[47] Rendsburg posits about the third person plural independent forms המה and הנה that the "Qumran scribes no doubt strove to retain these forms, believing them to be in some way archaic and authentic, or at least more archaic and authentic than the shorter forms,"[48] but he presents no arguments for this circular claim. Apparently, Rendsburg infers that given the assumed conservatism of the group, they must have preferred forms they considered as old. Likewise, the preference in many scrolls from Qumran for the divine name אל in stead of אלהים cannot simply be explained without further ado as deriving from the sect's "desire to present a variety of Hebrew that is ancient and archaic,"[49] without taking into account that אל also replaces יהוה, and that אלהים frequently takes on the meaning of "divine beings." With regard to the use of עדה and קהל, Rendsburg does not undertake any attempt to distinguish between the texts in which these terms occur (which might suggest that different groups used specific terms), or semantic differentiations between the words, let alone the very frequent use of the non-archaic יחד.

The long pronominal and adverbial forms were included by Emanuel Tov in the collection of elements that make up his construct of the so-called Qumran Scribal Practice. One of Tov's con-

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[45]Rendsburg, "Nature," 155.

[46]Kim, *Early Biblical Hebrew*, 99-107; Rendsburg, "Nature," 154.

[47]Note that Montgomery's textbook, 104, gives a sample of teenage subculture and slang and then poses the questions: "To what extent and in what ways does this data reveals aspects of an anti-language at work?" and "What further kinds of data would you need to collect in order to confirm that an anti-language is involved?" — questions which have not been tackled seriously by Schniedewind and Rendsburg.

[48]Rendsburg, "Trial Cut," 232.

[49]Rendsburg, "Trial Cut," 239.

tributions to the field is that he has sought to quantify data, and to correlate sets of data. This, in my opinion, should also happen with the suggestions, particularly those of Rendsburg, that Qumran Hebrew is characterized by archaic features. For example, Rendsburg repeatedly states that the Qumran scribes opted "as much as possible" for archaizing forms.[50] This simply is not true. Some forms, such as the long suffixed form of the second person singular are indeed extremely common, but many other archaizing forms are used inconsistently, or even as minority variants. That holds true for the "archaic form" למו,[51] occurring twenty times[52] in nonbiblical manuscripts, against more than 125 times להם or להמה. Also, this form occurs in a manuscript like 4Q258 that does not have any of the long pronominal or other long forms. If, at all, these different forms would represent classicizing or pseudo-classicizing tendencies, then certainly not "as much as possible," but to different degrees within one and the same manuscript, as well as within the collection as a whole.[53]

Observing phenomena is one thing, explaining them another. For example, Rendsburg argues that specific forms are used or even invented, "to give a patina of antiquity to the writings of the Qumran sect," or "to provide authenticity to the force of their words." This, in fact, amounts to the use of classicisms as an authorial strategy of authorization. A complicating factor here is that

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[50]Rendsburg, "Trial Cut," 244; "Nature," 158.

[51]Rendsburg, "Trial Cut," 239-40; "Nature," 154.

[52]Rendsburg mentions twenty-two occurrences in the (nonbiblical) DSS, but I do not include 1Q51 1 4 and 4Q391 12 1 (in both cases למו is part of a broken word). Note also the parallel occurrences in 4Q257, 4Q258, and 4Q259, which, if not included, gives overall seventeen different uses of למו. One may note that these include twice the phrase בצר למו (in 1QpHab 5:6 and 4Q178 1 2), twice לאין שארית ופליטה למו (CD 2:6-7 and 1QS 4:14), and twice the collocation חרת למו (in 1QM 12:3 and 4Q400 1 i 15). One may observe that in those Qumran texts, as in Biblical Hebrew poetry, למו is found frequently at the end of a clause.

[53]More generally, Stefan Schorch, "Review of *Diggers at the Well*," *RBL* 01/2003 already suggested that "the linguistic inconsistency of the documents should be regarded as an argument against the assumption of an ideology, because every ideology tends to establish strong rules."

neither Schniedewind nor Rendsburg systematically differentiates between texts and writings, that is, between manuscripts and compositions. For example, it is not clear how Rendsburg assesses the so-called biblical manuscripts. Surely, classicizing forms should not be necessary for biblical books? Indeed, most biblical manuscripts do not have the classicisms or pseudo-classicisms mentioned by Rendsburg. We never find למו in a Qumran biblical manuscript for להם, nor do we find אל where the Masoretic text has אלהים. The issue is less straightforward for the typical אביהו form of Qumran Hebrew. If MT has אביו, so do the Qumran biblical manuscripts, be it with one exception: 4Q72 (4QJer^{c}) reads אביהו where the MT tradition in 22:11 has אביו. For אחיו versus אחיהו we have even three cases where a Qumran text reads אחיהו against MT אחיו.[54] As is well known, only a minority of the biblical manuscripts uses the purportedly classicizing and pseudo-classicizing long forms on *-ah*. Famous are 1QIsa^{a}, 4Q27 (4QNum^{b}), and 11Q5 (the Great Psalms Scroll), but one might add about twenty more biblical manuscripts. Any sociolinguistic account which only looks at general features, but not at concrete data relating to production and use of specific manuscripts threatens to overlook some of the most important data we have. Thus, many of the Cave 4 Tefillin consistently use the long forms, whereas only few biblical manuscripts do so. Is this because their scribes wanted to make the biblical texts of these tefillin even more archaic than they already were? Likewise, the strange purportedly classicizing orthography of the Great Isaiah scroll would need to be related to the other features of the manuscript.

The supposition of Schniedewind and Rendsburg is that some Qumran Hebrew linguistic forms are anomalies, certainly not representing a dialect of their scribes, but at best an artificial literary sociolect. This seems to be an a priori dismissal of the possibility that the scrolls reflect a Hebrew dialect which either had retained forms on *-ah*, or had created them through analogy; or that the אביהו forms represented a spoken form comparable to the Samaritan *abiyyu* pronunciation.[55]

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[54] 4Q51 (2 Sam 3:27); 1QIsa^{a} (Isa 3:6; 41:6)

[55] Jan Joosten, "Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek in the Qumran Scrolls," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 351-74, at 326.

The question is not, however, whether one should produce a traditional linguistic[56] explanation or a sociolinguistic one. Two related issues are at stake here. The first concerns the relation between sociolect and written language. Halliday emphasized the nature of anti-language as a conversational language,[57] and Montgomery relates it to speech communities. Written language, however, is not simply a record of spoken language. For example, orthography is not simply a conventionalized code enabling reading and writing, but a highly visible domain in which standards can be established or contested. Thus, a shift towards a *plene* writing in many texts, or a conservative more *defective* orthography in other texts, preserved in the same collection, is not merely a linguistic phenomenon, but requires a sociolinguistic explanation, for example with the notion of "eye-dialects."[58] Moreover, the style of writing, and, for example, its linguistic features, may be as much or more dependent on genre, than on the social ideology of its authors. The second concerns the concept of standard, both of speech and of writing. We have little knowledge about the spoken Hebrew language, let alone about its possible standards, in Second Temple times. What we do have is a large heterogeneous collection writings from the Judean Desert, which strongly suggests multiple standards. Rather than contrasting written Qumran Hebrew to some external vernacular standard, one should, sociolinguistically, allow for differently coded varieties of one and the same language.

[56]Note that Schniedewind disparagingly qualifies these as neogrammarian in his "Prolegomena."

[57]Halliday, "Anti-Language," 579.

[58]Romaine, "Orthographic Practices," 190.